Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Defense Employee Please Guilty to Sexually Abusing Co-Worker on Military Base

A Department of Defense civilian employee pleaded guilty today to sexually abusing a co-worker while on a temporary duty assignment to the U.S. Naval base in Yokosuka, Japan in January 2016.

Acting Assistant Attorney General John P. Cronan of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, Acting U.S. Attorney Annette L. Hayes for the Western District of Washington and Special Agent in Charge Ron Beltz of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service's (NCIS) office in Bremerton, Washington made the announcement.

Michael S. Cerera, 36, of Port Orchard, Washington, pleaded guilty to one count of abusive sexual contact before U.S. Magistrate Judge J. Richard Creatura of the Western District of Washington. Sentencing has been scheduled for Aug. 9.

In pleading guilty, Cerera admitted that on or about Jan. 23, 2016, while a civilian employee of the Department of Defense in Yokosuka, Japan, he engaged in sexual contact with a female co-worker when she was physically incapable of declining participation in, or communicating her unwillingness to engage in, that sexual contact because she was asleep. Specifically, Cerera admitted that in the early morning, he was present in the victim's hotel room and climbed into her bed while she was unconscious. The victim woke to discover that, without her permission, Cerera had pushed her shirt up and was kissing or licking her right side and had placed one hand down the back of her underwear and digitally penetrated her vagina.

NCIS investigated the case. Trial Attorney Rami S. Badawy of the Criminal Division's Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Grady Leupold of the Western District of Washington are prosecuting the case.